

October 2002

\$18.8 MILLION IN HOUSING FUNDS ALLOCATED TO METRO VILLAS

City Heights Endeavor Termed a Model Urban Redevelopment Project

Recently, the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee announced that Metro Center, a City of San Diego redevelopment project, will receive an allocation of \$18.8 million in federal and state tax credits that will be used to fund new, affordable housing in City Heights. The Metro Villas, the housing component of the Metro Center project, was the only affordable housing development in San Diego to be awarded these tax credits.

The Metro Center is a model redevelopment project, not just for Mid-City but for all of San Diego. This \$44 million

– a 489-space parking structure to be shared by the housing and office complex.

The Metro Villas complex will include 120 affordable housing units made up of one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom units. These units will be made available to families and individuals who make less than 65 percent of the area's median income.

We have a critical need for decent, affordable, family homes for City Heights residents. This project provides two tot lots, exceeds the open space and parking requirements, and is located within yards of the busiest transit corridors in the city, including the new MTDB bus service, the Premium Express 'jobs routes' to Downtown and UTC.



An architectural rendering of the south elevation of Metro Villas.

project combines quality, affordable family housing located next to a park and transit services, combined with public facilities to help working families improve their lives. It sets the standard for future projects of this nature, and that's why I chose to make this one of my top 10 priorities while in office.

The Metro Center, to be constructed on University Avenue adjacent to and just west of the new Interstate 15, includes:

- a four-story, 81,000-square-foot office tower, which will be the future home of the Workforce Partnership One-Stop Metro Career Center, a job training center;
- a 5,000-square-foot childcare center;
- a community meeting facility;
- the Metro Villas housing complex that will include two tot lots; and

The Metro Career Center is scheduled to open by December 2003, while the housing component should be completed six to eight months after that.

In This Issue

(Click on a story below to visit that page)

Metro Villas Gets \$18.8 Million ...	1
Feds Called On To Replace Downtown SROs ...	2
Strategic Framework Hearing Oct. 22 ...	2
Two Talmadge Gates Restored ...	3
AIDS Walk Raises \$446,000 ...	3
Pothole Program Surpasses Goal ...	4
Council Recognizes LGBT Latin Pride ...	4

FEDS CALLED ON TO REPLACE DOWNTOWN SRO UNITS

Seniors, Vets, Working Families Face Uncertain Future

On Friday, October 4, Councilmember Ralph Inzunza and I, along with U.S. Representative Susan Davis and local housing advocates, held a press conference to demand that the federal government replace the 398 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units that are being lost downtown as a result of the new Federal Court House building. The press conference was held outside the Federal Building and across from the Capri Hotel, which currently contains 100 of the 398 units that will be taken off line.



Councilmember Atkins, with Councilmember Ralph Inzunza (left) and Congresswoman Susan Davis (right) called on the federal government to replace 398 SRO units being lost to the new Federal Court House.

This past August, the City Council declared a Housing State of Emergency, which included calling on the federal government to make a commitment to replace these units. The people that have been put out of the 298 units already taken off line have no place to go. We have asked the General Services Administration (GSA) to abide by the City ordinance which requires that any demolished SROs be replaced. The GSA has refused to abide by this ordinance, citing the fact that they have paid out what they call “relocation money” to some residents that had to abandon their SRO units. With nowhere to relocate, these people are on the verge of homelessness.

The answer to this problem is to create more housing units. The federal bureaucracy needs to develop a plan to replace these units. At a time when the City of San Diego is in the midst of a severe housing crisis, the federal government, and our elected officials in Washington, need to recognize that without affordable units being made available to those who need this assistance, seniors, veterans—especially those of the war in Vietnam—and working families, face the prospect of life on the street. That’s why Councilmember Inzunza and I were encouraged by the presence of Congresswoman Susan Davis, and applaud her commitment to lead the charge for us in Washington. We won’t allow this issue to die without an acceptable resolution being achieved first.

CITY COUNCIL TO CONTINUE HEARING ON STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OCT. 22

City of Villages Discussion Picks Up Where September 23 Meeting Left Off

The second round of public discussion on the Strategic Framework will take place at 10am on Tuesday, October 22, as part of the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. Members of the public will again be given a chance to express their views on the City of Villages concept that is a crucial element of the proposed Strategic Framework.

I am pleased that we will have this second opportunity for testimony because we need our other Councilmembers to hear from a wide range of our community leaders who support the concept of a City of Villages. Many of them support it for the same reasons that I do. This plan actually holds the line on increases in densities to the levels that already exist under our current community plans. Council District Three has taken the lion’s share of density over the last three decades, and it is now time to focus on the infrastructure deficiencies that this created.

The meeting will be held in Council chambers on the 12th floor of the City Administration Building, 202 C Street, downtown. Community members are encouraged to attend and let their voices be heard.

I believe that the Strategic Framework offers us an opportunity to address those issues and hold the City accountable to find the money to do this. We have spent years trying to revitalize our neighborhoods with the resources that have been available to us, and we have made great strides forward. Now, by implementing the City of Villages, we can begin creating a financing plan for our current and future needs—not just in District Three, but citywide.

For more information about the upcoming Strategic Framework hearing, call my office at 619/236-6633, or email me at ToniAtkins@sandiego.gov.

MID-CITY PIPELINE SET TO FLOW



Councilmember Atkins, Assemblymember Christine Kehoe and Mayor Dick Murphy were on hand Oct. 10 for the dedication of the Mid City Pipeline. The 4.5-mile, \$25 million project, which runs down El Cajon Boulevard, will bring increased water pressure to the District Three communities of North Park, University Heights, Normal Heights, Kensington, Talmadge and City Heights. The line replaces the 50-year-old Trojan line.

TWO TALMADGE GATES RESTORED

CDBG-Funded Historic Gate Restoration Off To a Bright Start

I was pleased to join members of the Talmadge Maintenance Assessment District for the unveiling of the first two remodeled Talmadge Historic Gates on October 10th. The gate restoration project is funded with District Three Community Development Block Grant funds I allocated over the past two fiscal years.



Talmadge Maintenance Assessment District members Jim Blevins, Fred Lindahl and Francisco Yescas join Councilmember Atkins at the recent unveiling of the first two newly restored Historic Talmadge Gates. Pictured here is the gate at Monroe and Highland avenues.

The eight gates, first erected in the 1920s, have come to symbolize the rich history of Talmadge, one of San Diego's more charming residential neighborhoods. Over time, the gates had fallen into disrepair until a group of local homeowners banded together to restore the gates to their original luster. All eight gates were named historic sites by the San Diego Historical Resources Board in 2000.

The gate restoration is a project of the Talmadge Maintenance Assessment District, which meets at 6:30pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December) at Our Father's House Church at 4481 Estrella Avenue. All residents of Talmadge are encouraged to attend. You can also visit their website at www.talmadge.org.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS AT ACCESS CENTER HOUSING PROJECT

Councilmember Atkins and AM ABLE President and CEO Robert Novak cut the ribbon opening the new Access Center housing project in Talmadge. Joining them are (left to right)

Leonard Brown of the Access Center, AM ABLE construction crew Valentin Garcia and family, and Bill Cogan, property manager with Cogan Properties.



AIDS WALK RAISES \$446,000 FOR LOCAL HIV/AIDS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Council Declares Oct. 6 'AIDS Walk San Diego Day'; District Three Team Reaches \$4,000 Goal

AIDS Walk San Diego went off without a hitch on Sunday, October 6th, with more than 15,000 walkers and runners gracing the streets in and around Hillcrest and Balboa Park for the annual event that helps raise much-needed funds for local HIV/AIDS service providers. At the conclusion of the event, Walk organizers announced that more than \$446,000 had been raised.



Councilmembers Scott Peters (left) and Byron Wear (right) flank Councilmember Atkins at the presentation of the Council resolution honoring AIDS Walk San Diego.

I was honored to sponsor a City Council resolution proclaiming October 6th to be "AIDS Walk San Diego Day" in the City of San Diego, and pleased that Councilmembers Scott Peters and Byron Wear were with me at AIDS Walk to present the proclamation to Ben Dillingham, the chair of the AIDS Walk board of directors. Both Scott and Byron joined our Council District Three team for the 5K walk, and they and members of their staffs helped our council office team reach its fund-raising goal of \$4000, which was good enough for sixth place among all the teams collecting funds.

Over 24 million people have died of AIDS worldwide, over 6,000 people in San Diego County have full blown AIDS, and it's estimated that almost 15,000 people in San Diego County are HIV positive. There is a new AIDS diagnosis every day in our county. And while it's fantastic news that there are new HIV drugs that are keeping people alive longer—even to the point where this is now considered a manageable disease—this means our service providers are serving more people for longer periods of time. That is why it's so important that we continue to support events like AIDS Walk San Diego that help keep these vital services available to those who need them. So think about joining us next year. I'd love to have you walk with our team!

POTHOLE PROGRAM SURPASSES GOAL!

Tree Planting Program Ready To Take Root

In early August we kicked off our District Three Pothole Program in an attempt to fill more pot holes faster over the course of three months. I funded the program with infrastructure funds set aside in Fiscal Year '02, and then enlisted the help of apprentice workers with the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council for the labor and materials, and got the City's Street Maintenance Department to donate the truck and monitor the program.

We set an ambitious goal to fill 300 potholes during the course of the three-month pilot program. I'm pleased to report that we reached our goal a month early! As of October 4th, we have already filled 340 potholes! So congratulations to the apprentice workers and City staff who made this program such a success. I'll have a final tally for you when the program concludes.



The District Three Pothole Program has surpassed its goal of 300 potholes. Due to its success, it will be extended for the remainder of the calendar year and possibly throughout the winter months.

I'd also like to highlight another infrastructure program available for our district. In 2002, the City Council approved the Urban Forestry Master Plan. As part of this plan, the Mayor set a goal of planting 5,000 trees a year for the next 20 years throughout the City. We are now ready to kick the program off and will be having a citywide Arbor Day on November 16, 2002, during which each council district will hold a tree planting event to commemorate the start of the plan.

Council District Three's Arbor Day celebration will take place in the Cherokee Point neighborhood of City Heights where 30 trees will be planted. Each council district will continue to plant trees throughout the year partnering with Urban Corp, People for Trees and the Business Improvement District (BID) Council.

In order to meet the budgetary requirements for this aggressive endeavor, the City has identified several funding sources which include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Transnet, State grants, Proposition 12 Park Bond funds and private donations. Each district will work with City staff to ensure that trees are planted in each district. I'll make sure to keep you posted on how this program proceeds in our district.

CITY HONORS EBONY PRIDE AND SAN DIEGO LGBT LATIN PRIDE

On Sept. 21 and Oct. 12, I presented the organizers of the inaugural Ebony Pride and the second annual San Diego LGBT Latin Pride with Council resolutions I sponsored honoring these event for their commitment to the City's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities of African and Latin descent.

Pride events held for our people of color communities—such as Latin Pride and Ebony Pride—bring stronger recognition of our diversity to the larger LGBT community. They raise the stature and visibility of these communities, and allow us to focus on their unique issues that often aren't recognized or discussed. I find these events to be very empowering for the communities of color, and I was honored to present Ebony Pride and San Diego LGBT Latin Pride with these Council resolutions saluting them for their efforts. This is a great way for us to remind ourselves of our need for continued commitment to diversity within the LGBT community and the community at large.

The resolution for Ebony Pride recognizes their commitment to improve the quality of life for LGBT persons of African descent by providing services and resources to advance the physical, spiritual, social and economic well-being of this vibrant yet often marginalized segment of our community. The LGBT Latin Pride resolution recognizes their efforts to improve the quality of life for LGBT persons of Latin descent by raising funds and awareness for services, programs and educational support provided by the beneficiary, Bienestar San Diego.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER OPENS



Councilmember Atkins joined City Attorney Casey Gwinn, Police Chief Dave Bejarano and Councilmember Donna Frye at the opening of the Family Justice Center on October 10. The center, the first of its kind in the nation, will provide a multitude of services to adults and children dealing with domestic violence. Councilmember Atkins allocated \$50,000 in District Three CDBG funds to the Family Justice Center, which is located at 707 Broadway in downtown San Diego.